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CONDITIONAL PETITION FOR EXTENSION OF TIME

If entry and consideration of the amendments above requires an extension of time, Applicants respectfully request that this be considered a petition therefor. The Commissioner is authorized to charge any fee(s) due in this connection to Deposit Account No. 14-1263.

ADDITIONAL FEE

Please charge any insufficiency of fees, or credit any excess, to Deposit Account No. 14-1263.

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Amendment under 37 CFR § 1.116 filed March 13, 2006

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REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of this application in view of the amendments above and the following comments.

Claim 10 has been amended to limit the claims to monocyclic heteroaryl. This has been done without prejudice to prosecuting the bicyclic heteroaryl in a continuing application.

Claim 10 has also been amended to require in step a) the presence of microorganisms and/or cell preparations thereof; and the presence of water having a pH of 3-11, based on 25°C. The language added is supported by the specification at page 4, lines 5-9.

Claim 10 has also been amended to correct a clear error in formula (II). The change is supported by the specification at page 4, line 12. A corresponding change has been made in the specification on pages 11-14.

Claim 10 has also been amended in clause b) i) to correct another clear error. The change is supported by the specification at page 12, lines 15-16.

Finally, new claims 21-24 are added, which are supported by page 7, lines 13-23.

Applicants do not believe that any of the amendments introduce new matter. An early notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Claims 10-16, 19 and 20 were rejected under 35 USC § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. The Examiner maintains his objection to the term "convert." In response, Applicants have amended main claim 10 so that the term "convert" no longer appears.

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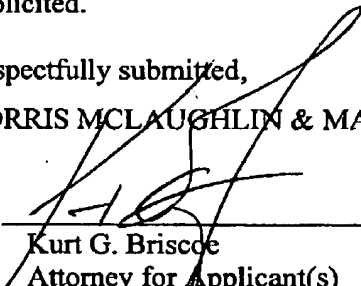
Claims 10-16, 19 and 20 were rejected under 35 USC § 112, first paragraph, as lacking adequate enablement. The Examiner maintains his objection to the phrase "6-10 ring atoms." In response, Applicants have amended claim 10 without prejudice to 6 ring atoms.

Applicants believe that the foregoing constitutes a bona fide response to all outstanding objections and rejections.

Applicants also believe that this application is in condition for immediate allowance. However, should any issue(s) of a minor nature remain, the Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned at telephone number (212) 808-0700 so that the issue(s) might be promptly resolved.

Early and favorable action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,
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